

# Lesson 1: Talateu – Introduction

25/04/2012 Wednesday

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❖ Màlò e Lelei! Welcome to an introduction to **Lea Faka-Tonga – The Tongan Language**

1. We are embarking on this new language series so that we align ourselves with the MOE's intention for schools to be **culturally responsive** and more focused on the achievement of pacific students
2. Each Wednesday, it is the intention of the Pasifika Fusion Festival Coordinators: Tangi, Leigh and Sharleen, together with the Special Project Coordinator: Whāea Jacque and our new Pasifika team member **Rina Kumar**, to
  1. avail staff of **commonly used classroom Lea Faka-Tonga**
  2. instruct staff on the **correct pronunciation** of Lea Faka-Tonga and
  3. Keep Freyberg staff up to date with **Pasifika news in our community** and provide interesting information regarding Pasifika culture.



- ❖ **Tangi**: Before we launch into our first Tongan word (beginning next week 09 May), we first want to share with you the reason why it is important to learn a little of the Tongan language.
- ❖ **Sharleen**: **Ko e Hà 'oku Ako ai 'a e Lea Faka-Tonga'?** *Why Learn Tongan?*
- ❖ **Rina**: **According to the Ministry of Education** Our multicultural society increasingly reflects a diversity of languages and cultures.

**All students benefit from learning another language from the earliest practicable age. Such learning broadens students' general language abilities and brings their own language into sharper focus. It enriches them intellectually, socially, and culturally, offers an understanding of the ways in which other people think and behave, and furthers international relations and trade**

***The New Zealand Curriculum Framework, page 10***

- ❖ **Leigh**: Migration from the South Pacific has led to the establishment of a number of distinct language communities in New Zealand. According to Statistics NZ, in 2006, the Tongan community was the third largest of these. Tongan is one of the most widely spoken Pasifika languages in New Zealand.



- ❖ Whāea Jacque: There are sound reasons for choosing to learn the Tongan language. Three of these are.

1. **The Tongan language has unique characteristics.**

- Tongan is **historically significant because it is one of the most ancient of the Polynesian languages**. It includes many old words and expressions for ancient customs and cultural items that are now extinct.
- The language has **5 levels of vocabulary** and usage that reflect Tonga's hierarchical social structure.
- Tongan has special connections with the New Zealand Māori language, as illustrated by the fact that New Zealand Māori and Tongan share **cognates** that are not shared by eastern Polynesian languages. For example, the word for mother in Māori is **Whāea**, a cognate for Tongan **fa'ē**, whereas several eastern Polynesian languages have the word **tinā** for 'mother'.

- ❖ Tangi:

2. **Learning Tongan enables learners to function more effectively in our multicultural society.**

- Bilingual skills are required in a number of situations at work and in the community. Learning Tongan will help learners to function more effectively in contexts in which Tongan is used.

- ❖ Sharleen:

3. **For all learners, there are cognitive benefits in learning additional languages.**

- There is evidence that people who become competent in two or more languages gain cognitive advantages. Learning Tongan will enable learners to reach higher levels of proficiency in the languages they already use and those they may learn in the future.